**I. Overview of Project**

**A. Description of proposed project**

The TRC project is designed to assist a motivated and committed administration and instructional staff in developing their skills in making the necessary shift from traditional teaching to facilitating student learning through project based learning (PBL) and other methods of constructivist pedagogy. All staff at Franklin (especially administration and the participating teachers) is keenly aware of the necessity to integrate technology into classroom instruction in meaningful ways and to implement engaging, challenging, and instructive lessons in a true 21st Century Learning Environment. While this awareness is developing, teachers are struggling to develop a full understanding and to apply and integrate new tools and methodologies in their practices. Consequently, they are requesting concentrated assistance in learning and mastering technology and investigative learning to enhance their skills and effectiveness. This project will provide the needed assistance and support to implement TRC in four classrooms and will provide the experience and in-house resources to expand and proliferate TRC throughout the school and to establish Franklin as a resource for expansion to other schools. The proposed project will provide professional development to one 3rd, one 4th, and two 5th grade classes and will concentrate on reading as the area of primary need. The presence of technology will be increased in this existing high access environment*.*

**B. Description of project/districts commitment**

Wichita Public Schools (WPS) – is totally committed to implementing the TRC. Central office administrators and building staff are all fully supportive of all aspects of the project. Having received and successfully implemented 6 TRC projects since 2002, the district has worked to expand and proliferate the project and its principles and practices throughout the district. WPS will continue to support TRC projects toward a change of culture throughout the district.

Franklin Elementary School – is aware of the increasing needs of its students and the need to implement more effective instructional strategies to prepare students to thrive in the 21st century. The entire staff is committed to this as a goal and knows the value of technology and constructivist pedagogy and has created and published a list of “*10 Commitments*” that clearly outlines that dedication and paves the way for TRC implementation. In her three years at Franklin, the principal has judiciously utilized funding from various sources to greatly increase the presence of technology in all classrooms and has encouraged the use professional development opportunities to maximize its effective use by teachers. The submission of this grant and the acceptance of and obligation to all assurances for its successful implementation is a further indication of this total commitment to doing whatever is necessary to provide 21st century learning environments for the benefit of students.

**C. Description of district/school needs**

Wichita Public Schools – is the largest school district in the state and is responsible for educating approximately 10% of the state’s k–12 population. As the state’s most diverse urban district, WPS has struggled to meet the demands of this diversity and to incorporate emerging technology and pedagogy to address those demands as well as the demands of an ever-changing student population with 21st century tools and methodologies. Research on brain-based learning and the profile of the today’s learner make the importance of adopting these practices increasingly evident. In spite of a knowledgeable and committed administration and staff, WPS is a district on improvement for the 6th year. In spite of achieving many points of pride and making consistent improvement on measures of student achievement, WPS still lags behind state averages on all assessed areas. Facing a $30 million shortfall in 2011-2012 (on top of a $24 million deficit in 2010-2011) resources to affect the necessary changes are extremely limited.

Franklin Elementary School – a Title I school that did not meet AYP goals in 2009-2010 and is consequently on improvement for reading for the next two years. The school struggles to serve the many needs of its very mobile, high risk, high poverty, and increasingly diverse population. Current demographics show a population with very high percentages of economically disadvantaged students (89.5%), a mobility rate ( %) and English Language Learners (21.2%) – all of which bring specific needs for effective instructional methodologies to assure their mastery of skills necessary for their success in the 21str century. Table 1 delineates the high level of those percentages when compared with the percentages for both WPS and for the state of Kansas.

*Table 1 – Demographic makeup of Franklin Elementary School by percent of total enrollment*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Af. Amer. | Hisp. | White | Other | F&R | ELL | Mobility |
| Franklin | 7.41 | 38.75 | 42.45 | 21.7 | 89.5 | 21.2 | 11.8 |
| District | 19.5 | 27.3 | 38.6 | 14.3 | 70.4 | 17.5 |  |
| State | 7.5 | 15.8 | 68.9 | 7.8 | 45.7 | 9.1 |  |

*Source: District Enrollment Records*

1) Student academic achievement

In the targeted area of reading, state assessment scores for Franklin students are significantly below both district and state averages as depicted in Table 2. On specific reading indicators for 3rd grade, scores for only 3 of the 11 were above the cut score and all but 1 showed decreases of as much of 12 points. For 4th grade, scores for 8 of 13 indicators showed a decrease of as much as 7.6 points.

Table 2: Percent of students scoring proficient and above – trend from 2006

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **% Scoring Proficient in Reading** | | | | | | **Increase in Academic Warning** | | | | | | | |
| **06** | **07** | **08** | **09** | **10** | **Change ‘09 to ‘10** | **3rd**  **2009** | | **3rd**  **2010** | | **4th**  **2009** | | **4th**  **2010** | |
| All Students | 58.5 | 60.9 | 70.9 | 65.1 | 57.1 | -8.0 | 24.1 | | 34.5 | | 8.5 | | 22.4 | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  |
| ELL | 51.2 | - | - | - | 32.4 | - | 18.2 | | 35.0 | | - | | 36.4 | |
| Low SES | 56.4 | 60.5 | 71.3 | 64.2 | 53.7 | -10.5 | 27.7 | | 36.0 | | 7.1 | | 24.4 | |
| Hispanic | 54.3 | 58.5 | 76.2 | 61.5 | 44.4 | -17.1 | 21.1 | | 31.8 | | - | | 21.1 | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  |
| White | 57.7 | 62.5 | 64.0 | 63.3 | 66.2 | +2.9 | 19.0 | | 36.4 | | 15.0 | | 10.5 | |

*Source: Official Enrollment Data*

Of specific concern – both to the benefit of individual students and to the school at large – is the achievement gap in reading that is negatively impacting the ability of the school to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals and to get off of improvement. A further analysis of the reading assessment data shows that scores for the school do not tell the whole story and that the need for enhanced instruction is far greater than depicted. While the scores for “All Students” and for each demographic subgroup has decreased for all groups except white students, there is an alarming trend in the 3rd and 4th grade to have significant increases in percentages of students scoring in the “Academic Warning” range (See table 2). In addition, AIMS Web assessment scores for reading were well below WPS targets and in all areas but one, the percent scoring less than the target was greater than the percent scoring higher.

2) Teacher professional development.

Teachers agree that the main missing ingredient to success is training on technology integration and continuing support through follow along training including coaching. Teachers’ self assessment on Profiler Pro yielded an overall average of 2.4 out of 5 points. Results further show that, with the exception of only three specific skills indicators, they feel that they do not currently have comfort in their ability to integrate any skill indicator into their teaching of students.

On a recent, locally developed survey of all teachers at Franklin, teachers revealed that:

* Teachers feel that they are “Proficient” or “Expert” with Microsoft word and Internet Explorer but are much less comfortable with Excel, Publisher and PowerPoint.
* Teachers are well based on the profile of the 21st century learner and on what is necessary to adequately educate them for the 21st century.
* 55% of teachers feel the educational system does not prepare students adequately to compete in the 21st century global economy.
* 95% of teachers are either “Somewhat Willing” (36%) or “Very Willing” (59%) to substantially change their instruction practices if provided PD and follow along support.

Further, teachers’ self assessment of their and the school’s status on the Project for the 21st Century’s *Mile Guide* shows that none see either themselves or the school as “21st Century” and besides an occasional project and extensive use of cooperative learning, they see the school as being only at the “Early” stage of transition.

Clearly, teachers are knowledgeable of what needs to be done and are personally motivated to learn how to better meet the needs of their students. Further, professional development is needed and desired by all staff to be able to make the necessary changes.

3) Need for technology

Since there has been conscientious and consistent acquisition of technology in the school, technology needs are limited to minimal requests to complete the requirements of a TRC classroom as outlined in the budget and budget narrative.

**D. Justification of need for project**

There is a strong and distinct need for the school to have the support of the TRC project in order to affect the necessary change in culture that is needed to establish Franklin as a 21st century learning environment that can adequately prepare students with the necessary skills and ability to thrive in their academic and life pursuits beyond high school. A recent survey of parents shows that --% of students have no access to technology at home, --% consider themselves to be “beginners” with technology and --%. In addition, --% feel that they cannot assist their child with technology related learning activities resulting in --% wanting more technology for instruction at school. Additionally, --% of parents feel that their child would be more engaged in school work if more technology was used in their classrooms.

With the drastic funding cuts experienced by the district, resources are increasingly limited for development of technology rich classrooms and the ability to increase teacher competence is greatly jeopardized. Given the needs of students and the dedication, motivation and commitment of the staff at Franklin, funding of the proposed project will not only yield increases in instruction and consequent improvement in their students’ scores, but it will also spawn a school wide change in culture that will benefit all students in an ever changing world.